Greatness

from page C1

hundreds of forms hidden in a block of clay appear more frail than they did in the photos of a strapping young artist 60 years ago.

The ebb and flow of time has washed away much of Fredericks' physical endurance.

Today, when Fredericks isn't holding a sculpting tool, or manipulating a fistful of clay, he's either resting in his Birmingham home or clutching onto a metal-frame walker.

He moves slowly, carefully. Shuffling along across the hardwood and tile floors in a classic-designed house filled with miniature models of his grand sculptures.

Yet even at 90, Fredericks maintains a working schedule. Nearly every day, he travels to his studios in Bloomfield Hills and Royal Oak, where he may work up to an hour on a sculpture before fatigue sets in.

As he pours through a pile of birthday greetings, an electronic beep from his watch reminds him to take a pill.

His nimble fingers pinch a tiny tablet from his pill box. "Care to join me," he said with a slight smile, and a glint in his eyes.

Just holding on? Not a chance.

Fredericks is proving that the artist behind public sculptures such as "Spirit of Detroit," "Freedom of the Human Spirit," "Fountain of Eternal Life," "Seven Saints and Seven Sinners," and "Christ on the Cross" is breathing the eternal air of his creations.

Instinctive appeal

Recently, Fredericks accepted a major commission from a western European country, whose name he wouldn't reveal. "I don't know if I can finish it," he said.

Who couldn't excuse him?

Fredericks hasn't stopped working since the mid 1930s when he emerged as an international sculptor after his first big commission, "Leaping Gazelle," at the Levi L. Barbour Memorial Fountain on Belle Isle.

For the last six decades, Fredericks sculptures have been included in many public and private collections.

"People react instinctively to his sculptures," said Michael Panhorst, director of the Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Gallery at Saginaw Valley State University.

"People point to the spirit in his work," he said. "Many of his works have helped to define a public area."

Indeed, it probably isn't until reviewing a list of his sculptures that the impact of Fredericks can be realized. (See chart)

So ingrained in the collective conscious is the "Spirit of Detroit," for instance, that when the Detroit Red Wings won the Stanley Cup last year, one of the most symbolic images reflecting the joy was a jersey draped over Fredericks' downtown sculpture.

While Fredericks' subjects include animals, human figures and ethereal renderings – such as the "Fountain of Eternal Life" at the Cleveland War Memorial – his work has a distinctive style.

Basically, Frederick's theme reflects man's essential attachment to nature. That translates into highly animated and emotionally infused animal sculptures and deeply spiritual human figures.

The mystery lies in the implied gesture, uplifting feeling and aesthetic balance of the forms.

Critics claim Fredericks' sculpture hasn't changed since his most fertile period in the 1930s and 1940s, when he taught at Cranbrook.

But comparing his work to other 20th-century sculptors is missing the point.

STAFF PHOTO BY DAN DEAN

Heroic: *Legendary sculptor Marshall Fredericks in front of his monumental tribute to Lord Byron.*

Fredericks is foremost a prime conduit for perpetuating the tradition of Renaissance sculptors, Rodin and Milles.

"His work relies on the human figure," said Panhorst. "It's filled with optimism, stamina and a commitment to life."

But equally compelling, Fredericks personifies the grandeur of his great works.

"Those who know Mr. Fredericks are inspired by him," said Panhorst. "He symbolizes a personal commitment to do his best at everything he does."

Heroic heart

Since the late 1980s, one particular sculpture has consumed Fredericks, "Lord Byron." While the bronze sculpture appears in the Frederik Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids, Fredericks has continued to tinker with the clay form.

The origin for the sculpture dates to Fredericks formative years in the 1930s when he spent as much time writing poetry as sculpting.

During the last several years, according to Panhorst, "Lord Byron" has looked essentially the same. At least to the uncritical eye.

Fredericks recalled observing his mentor, Milles, rework a sculpture long after it appeared finished. A perfectionist never rests.

Throughout his life, Fredericks has been determined to "get it right," an indelible philosophy also instilled by his Danish and Norwegian parents.

Today, long after his colleagues have passed away and the art world has returned to explore the human figure, Fredericks hasn't stopped looking for a challenge.

"Lord Byron" is both a towering reminder and a bold monument to Fredericks' grand vision.

The mammoth sculpture of the early 19th-century English poet stands as Fredericks' alter ego.

It's only appropriate. Byron and Fredericks. Prolific idealists who believe life is a romantic adventure.

After 90 years, time may have weakened Fredericks' hands, and dulled his senses, but it can't claim a province in restraining his heroic heart.

Where Can You Satisfy Your Appetite For Romance?

Right Here. Make any weekend a romantic escape with your sweetheart. With our Lelli's Dinner Package you'll enjoy a luxurious two-room suite, complimentary prepared-to-order breakfast each morning and beverage reception each evening, a seven course dinner for two at the renowned Lelli's Inn, and transportation to and from dinner. For reservations, call your professional travel agent, 1-800-HILTONS, or the Auburn Hills Hilton Suites at 248-334-2222.

$159* PER NIGHT PER NIGHT

Lelli's Inn

2300 Featherstone Road
Auburn Hills, MI 48326
248-334-2222

Auburn Hills Hilton SUITES

www.hilton.com Beverage reception included in suite price subject to state and local laws. *Offer valid Friday to Sunday now through 5/31/98. Offer not available 2/14/98. Lobster tail additional. Limited availability, advanced reservations required. Rate does not include tax or gratuity and does not apply to meetings, conventions, groups, or other promotional offers and are subject to change without notice. Other restrictions may apply. The Hilton logo and logotype are registered trademarks of Hilton Hotels Corporation. ©1998 Hilton Hotels.

THE WORLD FAMOUS

Royal Lipizzaner Stallions

"The Wonderful World of Horses"

Witness the equestrian treat of the century, including The Airs Above the Ground." Each animal is a work of Art, each rider an Artist at work. Don't miss the "Dancing White Stallions from Vienna."

TODAY • 2 & 6 PM

PALACE of AUBURN HILLS

GREAT SEATS STILL AVAILABLE AT THE BOX OFFICE

WXYZ

http://www.foxtheatres.com
© The Royal Lipizzaner Stallions, Inc. 1997

Tickets on sale now!
COME WITH US OVER THE RAINBOW.

APRIL 10-26
LIVE AT THE FOX THEATRE
TO CHARGE BY PHONE: (248) 645-6666
Get your tickets now at the Fox Theatre Box Office, all locations including HUDSON'S, Harmony House & Blockbuster Music. www.ticketmaster.com
ATTENTION SCHOOLS AND GROUPS! Special educational program available at an incredible school rate! SAVE! Groups 20 or more call (313) 963-3099
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (313) 963-8611
PHOTO BY ERIC MUNNS FOX-TV CHICAGO
FOX

Visit us at www.firstofamerica.com

Working day and night to earn higher interest rates. That's a first.

The Superior Performance Fund

The Superior Performance Fund is superior in many ways. Fully-liquid, FDIC insured. And when you open your new account with a minimum balance of $25,000 in new money*, you'll earn a higher interest rate tied to the 13-Week Treasury Bill. So when market rates go up, so will the interest you earn. Opening an account on-line is easy, just visit us at www.firstofamerica.com

SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE Fund
5.25% TO APY
5.75% APY

cash MANAGEMENT CHECKING
4.75% APY
Based on an example balance of $25,000

Cash Management Checking

Does your checking account pay a rate like this? Unlike regular checking accounts, First of America's Cash Management Checking account works through the night to give you high interest on higher balances. Plus, you'll get unlimited check writing and an FDIC insured. So start earning a rate like this on your checking – just open your new account with new money. Call us at 1-800-222-4FOA today.

1-800-222-4FOA

FIRST OF AMERICA

*Annual Percentage Yields (APYs) and interest rates are accurate as of 1/14/98 and apply only to new accounts opened with new money. New money is defined as money not currently on deposit with First of America. APYs and interest rates are subject to change without notice after account opening. For Cash Management Checking, the interest rate for the portion of the balance above $5,000 is tied to the weekly average of overnight Federal Funds Rates less not more than 1%, which as of 1/14/98 is 5.41%. The portion of the balance $5,000 and below earns an interest rate determined by the Bank, which as of 1/14/98 is 1.50%. The APY ranges from 1.50% to 3.25% on $100,000. For Superior Performance Fund the interest rate for the portion of the balance that is $100,000 or more will be tied to the 13-Week Treasury Bill weekly auction discount rate, less not more than 1.50%. As of 1/14/98, [illegible] 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., M-F at 1-800-380-4614. ©1998 First of America Bank Corporation.